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Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdome of this World? 1 Cor. 1. 20.

THese have always been the Enemies aud opposers of Truth, and Setters up of false Images thereof in all ages, *The Wise, the Learned, the great Disputants.* To these Truth hath still been mean and contemptible, their Eye hath still overlooked it, and their imaginations have still out-run it, finding out somewhat else in the stead thereof, for which they have been still able and vigorous to contend, and against the Truth it self. And indeed, how can the Wise Eye see that, how can the learned Eye acknowledge that, which comes quite out of the way of it's knowledge and learning, even in a path that it is not at all acquainted with? *Wisdom is justified of her Children,* Those that are wise to Salvation, those that are learned in the Spirit, those that can dispute in the power of the life aud demonstration of the Spirit, these know her habitation, and her out-goings, and can own her in every age, and in every dispensation and coming forth: but the Wise and Learned of this World are shut out of this wisdom, and in all their searches after Truth, cannot find her; and if at any time they do find and tast somewhat of her, yet they cannot keep her, but the Wisdom, and Learning, and Strength of the earthly part in them, soon betrayes and makes a prey of the simplicity that is in Christ, and of his pure Gospel, which cannot be comprehended nor will take up a dwelling place with this wisdom, but brings it to nothing, tramples upon it, and keeps it down for ever, where it abides.

Three sorts of Enemies of the Wise, the Learned, the great Disputants, Truth hath always had. First, Of such as have denyed the true form of knowledge and worship. Secondly, Of such as have owned the form, but withstood the power. Thirdly, Of such as have had a tast of the power, but afterwards erred from it, and so held that, which once they had a true tast of, in the unrighteous part, and likewise added to it by their own imaginations,

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Signed J. P.

When *Israel* was in *Ægypt* (that poor illiterate company of Brick-makers) in bondage under that wise people ; the Egyptians, withal their wisdom, could not own their God or their worship, but their God was an unknown Being to all that wisdom (*Exod.* 5. 2.) and his worship and sacrifice the abomination of their Eyes, *Exod.* 8. 26. and *Jannes* and *Jambres*, with other wise Magitians, withstood the appearance of God, and *Pharoah* and his people with their wisdom thought to have kept God's *Israel* from multiplying, *Exod.* 1. 10. and to have held *Israel* still under their servitude, after the Lord was risen to stretch out his Arm for their deliverance, *Exod* 5. 8, 9 And how did all the wise Nations still watch to make a prey of God's *Jerusalem*! How did they count the Towers! How often did they think to divide the spoyl! *Judg.* 5. 28. *Isai.* 33. 18. How did *Senacharib* and *Rabshacka* make her their own! And when the Lord did at any time give Jacob *for a spoyl*, *and* Israel *to the Robbers*, how did they think to keep her under for ever! The wise Assyrian, the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Edomite, the Philistim, the Amalekite, the wise Babylonian or Chaldean thought to keep her under, as *Pharoah* had done, even till their wisedome and knowledge perverted them also, *Isai.* 47. 10. and the Prince of *Tire*, who was wiser then *Daniel*, *Ezek.* 28. 3. he also could insult over *Jerusalem*, and rejoyce at her downfal and captivity, *chap.* 26. 2.

But to come closer ; Come to *Israel* it self. That people, by all the wisdome it could gather from the Law, by all the experiences it had had of God's power, by all the faith that was wrought in them upon deliverances, yet had not Eyes to see, nor Ears to hear, nor Hearts to perceive, but were a people that did always err in their Hearts, and did not understand the way of Truth and Peace. The Prophets among them were still Fools, yea, the Spiritual man mad, *Hos.* 9 7. The Priests were generally ignorant of the Lord (for though they had the Ark of his presence, his Tabernacle, his Temple, Altar, Sacrifices, Worship, &c. yet they did not know where he was, nor did inquire after him, but contented themselves with a form of knowledge and worship.) And they that handled the Law knew not him who gave the Law, and was the sole true interpreter of the Law, but the Pastors transgressed against him, and the Prophets prophecied by another Spirit, *Ier.* 2. 8. They were wise, and did abound in their own meanings, guessings and gathered knowledge, but they knew not the Truth, no not of the Letter according to the Law, and according to that Light, which God sometimes caused to shine among them from his Prophets. Hence it was that that people, with their Rulers, their Teachers, their Priests, their Prophets, were generally enemies to the Prophets whom God raised up, hating, persecuting, imprisoning, stoning them, &c. The Prophets of God (that spake his Truth in his Wisdom, in his Life, in Power, in the demonstration of his Spirit) they could not away with : these were Fools with them, these were mad-men with them, (2 *Kings* 9. 11. *Ier.* 29. 26.) these were poor illiterate Herdsmen and Plowmen : they had learned men, that were

were brought up at the Schools of the Prophets, that could Prophecy Divine things, sweet things, that could open the Law learnedly; these Prophets, and these Priests the Rulers cherished, and the people loved, *Ier.* 5. 31. and 23. 26, 27. *Ezek.* 13. 3, &c.

Yea among that people, such as had had a tast of the Truth, as *Corah Dathan* and *Abiram* might have (for surely it was not a small matter that could so lift them up, to oppose *Moses* and *Aaron* in that manner, and to stand out the contest with them even in the Lord's presence, *Numb.* 16. 18. but an apprehension of God's being on their side from some appearance of his to them) and as *Balaam* had, whose Eyes were opened to see the beauty of the Tents of *Iacob*; yet these, through the prevalency of the fleshly lusts and wisdome, become enemies, and try always to prevail over *Israel*, even over the Truth and over the Power. The Apostle *Jude* compares such to the Angels that kept not their first Estate. The Angels that fell, had a place and standing once in truth, but they kept it not (they abode not in the truth) but fell from it, and so became Devils, enemies to the truth from which they fell: So those that fall from the truth, from the power, from the living vertue whereof they once tasted, from the true wisdome, which once appeared to them and began to season and savour them, in their fallen wisdome they become the greatest enemies, the greatest accusers, the greatest opposers, and the stiffest maintainers of a false Image of that Truth, which they once had some knowledge of, and some unity with. Thus it was in the Jewish state; Now come to the Apostles dayes.

First, They had all the Wise men of that age against them, all the Wise Greeks, all the Wise Jews; the Learned men, the able Disputants of all sorts. The Greeks could not find wisdome in that knowledge of Christ which they held forth, nor the Jews could not find power in it, 1 *Cor.* 1. 22. and so the one accounted it foolishness, the other stumbled at it, *v.* 23. There were many sorts and Sects of Wise-men among the Iews, but not one sort could own the Truth, though they were looking for it, searching the Scriptures about it, and disputing concerning it. The very thing then in agitation and inquirie among them was, *when the Kingdom of God should come*. The King himself direct them where it was, that they might know where to expect and wait for it, *Luke* 17. 21. and in many parables opens it to them, but it was still hid from the Eye of that wisdom, wherewith they did strive to see, understand and comprehend it. So that all the several sorts of Wise-men of that age, even those who were Admirers of the Law and the Prophets, yet were Strangers and Enemies to the Truth, because they joyned to that Wisdom, and to that Learning and comprehension of the Scriptures, out of the sight whereof it came.

Secondly, For such as did own Christ after the flesh, such as were convinced by his Miracles, (as *Nicodemus* and many of the honester sort of the Iews were) yet Christ did not commit himself to them, *Joh.* 2. 24. He knew this faith and this owning of him, which was founded upon the Wisdom and Ingenuity of the creature would fail; and so he would

not own it in *Nicodemus*, but bids him look after the new birth, (*Joh.* 3. 2, 3.) nor in such as followed him up and down upon this or any other fleshly account, but sometimes withdrew and hid himself from them, (*Luke* 5.16 *Joh* 6. 14, 15.) and sometimes preached Doctrines which stumbled them, and made them withdraw from him, *Joh.* 6, 66. And so in the Apostles days, there were many could get the form, and gain advantage thereby to the fleshly wisdom, to withstand the power, 2 *Tim.* 3.5. 2 *Cor.* 11.13.

Thirdly. There were such as had tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the World to come, and yet fell away, *Heb.* 6.4,5,6. There were such as denyed the Lord that bought them, 2 *Pet* 2.1. Such as fell from the love of the Truth, to the love of their vomit, and of the mire of the World again, *v.*22. 2 *Tim.* 4.10. Such as had a standing in the Churches Heaven (like the Angels which fell) but kept not their habitation, but were swept down from thence to the earth by the Dragons tail, *Rev.* 12 4. These are the notablest Champions (in the earthly wisdom, and for a corrupted estate and false Image) of all the rest.

Now as the Prophets of God among the Jews had these enemies, and as the Apostles also had these enemies: so all along the Apostacy these enemies have been rise. The witnesses have had a wise sort of direct opposers among the Papists, a wise sort of secret underminers among the Protestants, and also another wise sort of such among themselves, as had some tast of the Truth, but departed from the power of it into the earthly wisdom, into the earthly understanding: and this last sort fight more furiously and more vehemently against the Truth, and are more subtile to assault it and grapple with it, then the other two. Oh there is no such bitter deadly enemy to Christ and his Truth, as he who once had some tast of the vertue of it, and is now turned from it into the Earth, into the wisdom and love of the World, and yet still holds some of the notion of that Truth (whereof he once left the power) in the earthly part.

To come yet closer. There is in every man (not throughly sanctified) that Wisdom which is not of God, that wisdom from which God hides his precious Truths, which wisdom lyes ready to catch every discovery and revelation of truth to him, that it might improve it, grow rich and wise by it. Now this Wisdom cannot attain to the knowledge of any of the things of God, neither can this Wisdom keep the true knowledge, but whatever this Wisdom catcheth, it presently corrupts. The true Wisdom, the true Light, the true Knowledge of Christ is like the Manna in the Wilderness; it dayly comes down from Heaven, and must dayly be gathered fresh. The true Light springs from the Life, and it must be held in the Life, in the Vessel which the Life forms, in the new Bottle, in the new Understanding; not in the fleshly part, nay not in the natural part: for as the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2.14. So neither can he retain them. The old store house, into which earthly things were gathered, must be burnt up, and not made a Treasure for the things of God, but the new understanding, which is given

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by him that is true, (1 *Joh.* 5.20.) which new-forms, and preſerves, and is all in the natural. Sink out of the earthly part and read me, that thou mayſt be able to ſay within thy ſelf, and concerning thy ſelf, Where is the Wiſe? where is the Scribe? where is the Diſputer?

The Wiſe part, the knowing part, the reaching part in every man will be putting forth it's hand to gather of the Tree of Life: but what hath it ever been able to gather? I know men may gather notions of any kind, of any Sect, of any ſort of Profeſſion, of any appearance or diſpenſation: but who is able to come near the Life, to touch the Power, the Truth, the everlaſting Spring, or any ſtream or drop of water that iſſues from it? And he who hath a true touch or taſt thereof given him, can his Wiſdom add to it? nay can he ſo much as retain it? (*David* had a true ſence and experience of this, who cryed out, *O continue thy loving kindneſs to them that know thee, and thy righteouſneſs to the upright in heart.*) Indeed if he like not to retain the thing it ſelf in his knowledge, he may improve the notion, and bend that to the temperature and diſpoſition of the earthy part in himſelf and others; but this is not truth, but a dead image, or a dead remembrance of what once was truly living. Oh how doth the Soul that is begotten of the Divine breath, that is born of the living Power and Vertue, depend upon God for his continual breathings! There is nothing hath ſo much from God, and yet nothing is ſo little able to live without him. If he withdraw from it, it preſently hangs down its head: nay if he do but ſo much as hide his face, it is troubled; and all the fulneſs, which it immediatly before had from God, is not able to keep up its Life one moment, but it pants, & fails, & flags, & withers, until a new ſupply of refreſhment be adminiſtred to it. And he that knows this in any meaſure, will not wonder at, the diſtreſs and miſery of ſuch for want of God's preſence, and at their cryings out after the Spring of their Life (even as the Hart brayeth after the water brooks) though they ſhould have fulneſs of all outward things, yea and alſo fulneſs of knowledge in things of Religion, even concerning all conditions and eſtates. The thing that I wanted in my great miſery, it was not outward knowledge, it was not experience of God's mercy and goodneſs: but this I wanted, the iſſuings forth of his freſh Life, and livingly to know where to wait for it, and livingly to know it when it appeared: for it was ſtill near me all the time of my darkneſs, and did preſerve me and appear unto me, but I livingly knew it not, but thought I would be wiſer then others: For I ſaw many deceived, and ſo I would not own it in ſuch a way as it then appeared in me, leaſt I alſo ſhould be deceived like others, but waited for ſuch an appearance as could not be queſtioned by the fleſhly Wiſdom. And he that waits for that, and ſo deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, cannot but refuſe the little ſeed; and ſo, it being not received into his earth, it can never grow up in him into a great Tree, whereby the Glory of the Kingdom will be hid from him, and he ſhut out of it, when others enter into and ſit down in it. Therefore, *he that will be Wiſe, let him become a Fool that he may be Wiſe*; Let him receive that for his Light, his King, his Guide,

Guide, which mans wiſdom never did nor never will own. He that ever looks to injoy the Comforter, let him receive the Reprover, the Convincer of ſin, and wait for his Law of judging him throughout the whole courſe of his ſinful State and Nature, paſſing along with him through the whole condemnation, until he arrive with him at the juſtification of the Life, which the fleſhly wiſdom, nor any of his knowledge of the things of God, (as they are held in the fleſhly part) muſt ever arrive with him at.

Hath not God made fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World?

The Wiſdom of this World is precious in the Eye of the World, and the Wiſdom of God in his poor, weak, deſpiſed, earthen Veſſels is ſtill fooliſhneſs with them: but the Lord ſo orders it, as he ſtill juſtifies his deſpiſed Wiſdom in his deſpiſed Veſſels, and makes the Wiſdom of the World appear fooliſh to all the ſingle and upright-hearted, who thirſt after and wait for the Revelation of his Truth. Now two ways eſpecially the Lord makes the folly of this Worlds Wiſdom appear.

Firſt, In that by all their Wiſdom they cannot find out the true knowledge of God, *v.* 21. *The World by wiſdom knew not God*, though there be an exceeding deſire kindled in them to know God, though they take all the ways that heart can imagine to attain their deſires, though they ſtudy and meditate never ſo hard, though they get never ſo many Arts & Languages, nay though they read the very Scriptures never ſo diligently, though they *labour in the very fire*, yet what they get, what they gather, what they underſtand, what they comprehend by this Wiſdom, it is all but *very vanity*, Hab. 2. 13. it reaches not the Immortal, it nouriſhes not the Immortal, it ſatisfies not the Soul, it refreſhes not the ſeed, but only feeds and pleaſes the earthly part, the earthly underſtanding, the earthly mind, the earthly deſires and affections, even the man's Part, the man's Spirit, the man's Nature, which though elevated and raiſed never ſo high, is ſtill but earth.

Secondly, In that all their Wiſdom cannot teach them to come down to, to ſubmit to, to come into God's way of having their Wiſdom crucified, and that raiſed up in them which might receive the Truth. This they can never learn in the fleſhly Wiſdom. They may indeed come thus far, even to ſee that there is no way of entrance but by death, and ſo ſeek death (that they may enter into the Life) but they cannot find it. The ſeed of *Jacob* in his ſeeking miſſes not, but this Seeker never finds, to this Asker it is never given, and to this Knocker it is never opened: and that is it which makes this Wiſdom in every appearance, in every ſort of Profeſſion and Sect of Profeſſors, ſo rage at the ſeed of *Jacob*, even becauſe it finds it ſelf ſtill ſhut out of the Life, into which an entrance is adminiſtred to the ſeed. And how can that which would fain have the Kingdom, but rage againſt that which takes the inheritance from it? how can every ſort of Profeſſors but ſtrive to ſlay the heir, that the inheritance might be theirs? Were it not for the living Seed, and the living Power and Vertue, which breaks forth in them and among them, the Religion

ligion and Worſhip of the firſt birth might paſs for currant: but this is it which darkens the Glory of all Profeſſions and Profeſſors upon the earth, even that living thing which God hath begotten in his people, and his living preſence with it, and bleſſing upon it: at this, all the zealous Sacrificers, Teachers, and Profeſſors out of the Life rage and are mad, and would break the cords and bands wherewith this ſtrives to bind them unto God's Altar.

Now look over all Ages, could the Wiſe Heathens ſtoop to God's diſpenſation to the Jews? was it not fooliſhneſs and abomination to them? or could the Wiſe Jews ſtoop to the Law within, to the Word in the Heart, (although directed thereto by *Moſes*, *Deut.*30.14.) to learn there to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God? *Mic.* 6.8. Could they wait there to have their Hearts circumciſed by that Word of power, and ſo to be waſhed and made clean? Nay were they not drowned in their outward Sacrifices, Temple, Incence, New-Moons and Sabbaths, and ſuch kind of obſervations, and could not hear the Truth of the Lord as it was delivered by *Moſes*, nor as it was opened by the Prophets (*Iſa.*1.11.) So that this People ſeeking to know the Lord from the Letter by this Wiſdom, could never come to the knowledge of him, but the place of his Light and Wiſdom was hid from them.

Again, When Chriſt came, and the Kingdom was preached, and the everlaſting way of Redemption and Salvation made manifeſt, could the Wiſe Eye in the Greeks, or the Wiſe Eye in the Jews ſee it? did not the Greeks ſhut themſelves out by a Wiſdom above the Letter (as they thought) and the Jews by a knowledge and Wiſdom which they had gathered out of the Letter? How wiſe were they from the Letter to reaſon againſt the King of Life? *This man cannot be of God, for he is a breaker of his Sabbath. He is a Nazarite, and can any good thing come out of* Nazareth? *He ſaith the Son of man muſt be lifted up, but we read that Chriſt abideth for ever. He is againſt Gods Temple, againſt Gods day of Worſhip, gives his Diſciples ſuch ſcope and liberty, as neither the Phariſees nor* John *gave their Diſciples, but reviles our ſtrict and Godly Teachers and Expounders of the Law, calling them Hipocrites, blind Guides*, &c. *And mark with what a rough ſevere Spirit he reproves them, whereas they call him Maſter, and ſpeak mildly and gently to him.* O what Jew in that Nature, in that Wiſdom, in that Spirit could but find matter and occaſion of ſtumbling at Chriſt, even from the Law & the Prophets!

And as they ſtumbled at the true Chriſt, ſo have all the generations of wiſe men ſince the Apoſtacy, all the learned men generally (their Councils, Synods, Convocations and Aſſemblies) ſtumbled at the true Church, looking for ſome ſuch like building as had been in the Apoſtles days, and not underſtanding and obſerving how the Lord took down that building (as it had been ſet up in the World) and how he prepared a place in the Wilderneſs for his true Church, unto which he gave her wings to fly, *Revel.* 12. and how afterwards the falſe Woman, or falſe Church got up in her ſtead, who with a Golden Cup of fornication bewitched the

Kings

Kings and Inhabiters of the Earth, *Revel.* 17. 2. (even Peoples, Multitudes, Nations and Tongues, *ver.* 15.) So that they miſtook her for the True Church, and went into her Bed of *Whoredomes*? Which of all the learned men, which of all the Councils of the Papiſts have ſeen this? nay which of the Proteſtant Councils, or Convocations or Aſſemblies have beheld the State of the True Church? nay have not every Sort and Sect of the Proteſtants endeavoured to build up ſome Image or likeneſs of the True Church, not ſo much as ſuſpecting that ſhe was fled into, and was to abide in the wilderneſs for a time, times and half a time? O what darkneſs hath covered the Earth! O how hath God befooled the wiſemen of every ſort, the wiſe-men of every age! the wiſe Proteſtants, aſwel as the wiſe Papiſts; the wiſe Independents and Baptiſts, aſwell as the wiſe Epiſcopalians and Presbiterians! and how blind and fortiſh are Nations and Peoples, that ſtill they think to find out the Truth by having a Synod, Aſſembly or Convocation of the *Wiſemen* gathered together? Indeed they are fitteſt to rear upon an Image to pleaſe the earthly part of man, and the earthly Powers and intereſts with, but Truth never came in by that way, but the *Wiſe* and learned have ſtill been ſhut out from it, and have proved Enemies to it. And whoſoever comes out of the Apoſtacy from the Spirit and from the Truth, to the Spirit and Truth again, ſhall find nothing ſo great an Enemy, as the wiſdom in himſelf, and directions from the wiſdom in others: for that which God leads, is a ſimple, a weak Babe, a Child to the *Wiſdom* of this *World*; and he leads it in a Path, which is wholly out of the line of this worlds *Wiſdom* and Knowledge of the *Scriptures*, as the Path God choſe in Chriſts and the Apoſtles dayes, was out of the line of the Iews knowledge of the *Scriptures*. *Such* is the recovery out of the Apoſtacy: it is hid from all the fleſhly-wiſe-men of this age, even as the entrance into the Truths of the Kingdom was hid from all the fleſhly-wiſe-men of that age. Happy is he who ceaſeth from ſtriving after the knowledge and comprehending of the things of God in this *Worlds Spirit* and *Wiſdom*, and waiteth in the humility and fear of the Lord, firſt to be made a Fool, that afterwards he may be made *Wiſe* unto everlaſting Life.

J. P.

The End.

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